

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Ronal W. Serpas



Office of the State Fire Marshal *State Fire Marshal Mary Corso*

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Burn Awareness Week

Chief Ronal W. Serpas announced today that February 2nd through the 8th is Burn Awareness Week focusing on "Senior Burn Awareness." This national campaign is sponsored by the American Burn Association and is designed to provide an opportunity for burn, fire, and life safety educators to unite in sharing a common burn awareness and prevention message in our communities.

State Fire Marshal Mary Corso added, "At age 65, older adults are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires compared to the population at large. Burn Awareness Week, celebrated early in the year, is an excellent opportunity to "kick off" a year full of burn awareness education."

The National Fire Protection Association recommends these fire prevention guidelines for older adults:

1. Provide smokers with large, deep ashtrays. Wet cigarette butts and ashes before emptying ashtrays into a wastebasket. Never smoke when you are lying down, drowsy, or are in bed.
2. Give space heaters space, keep them at least three feet from anything that can burn. Unplug heaters when you shut them off, leave your home, or go to bed.
3. Be kitchen-wise—wear tight-fitting or rolled-up sleeves when cooking. Use oven mitts to handle hot pans. Never leave cooking unattended. If a pan of food catches fire, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner. Don't cook if you are drowsy.
4. Stop, drop, and roll if your clothing catches on fire. Stop right where you are, drop gently to the ground, cover your face with your hands, and roll over and over to smother the flames. If you cannot do that, smother the flames with a towel or blanket. Immerse burns in cool water for 10 to 15 minutes. If burns are severe, get medical help immediately.
5. Smoke alarms save lives. Install smoke alarms outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Test smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button. Make sure everyone in your home can hear your smoke alarms.
6. Make and practice a fire escape plan. Plan your escape around your abilities. Have a phone in your bedroom to call for emergency assistance. Once you have escaped a fire, stay out and call the fire department from a neighbor's phone.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State, including inspections of state-licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information, you may visit our web page at www.wa.gov/wsp and then click on "State Fire Marshal."

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